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VANITY FAIR:

PEN AND PENCIL SKETCHES OF ENGLISH SOCIETY.

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Ensign Stubble practising the art of War

A Family Party at Brighton

CHAPTER XXIII.

CAPTAIN DOBBIN PROCEEDS ON HIS CANVASS.

WHAT is the secret mesmerism which friendship possesses, and under the operation of which a person ordinarily sluggish, or cold, or timid, becomes wise, active, and resolute, in another's behalf? As Alexis, after a few passes from Dr. Elliotson, despises pain, reads with the back of his head, sees miles off, looks into next week, and performs other wonders, of which, in his own private normal condition, he is quite incapable; so you see, in the affairs of the world and under the magnetism of friendship, the modest man become bold, the shy confident, the lazy active, or the impetuous prudent and peaceful. What is it, on the other hand, that makes the lawyer eschew his own cause, and call in his learned brother as an adviser? And what causes the doctor, when ailing, to send for his rival, and not sit down and examine his own tongue in the chimney glass, or write his own prescription at his study table? I throw out these queries for intelligent readers to answer, who know, at once, how credulous we are, and how sceptical, how soft and how obstinate, how firm for others and how diffident about ourselves: meanwhile it is certain that our friend William Dobbin, who was personally of so complying a disposition that if his parents had pressed him much, it is probable he would have stepped down into the kitchen and married the cook, and who, to further his own interests, would have found the most insuperable difficulty in walking across the street, found himself as busy and eager in the conduct of George Osborne's affairs, as the most selfish tactician could be in the pursuit of his own.

Whilst our friend George and his young wife were enjoying the first blushing days of the honeymoon at Brighton, honest William was left as George's plenipotentiary in London, to transact all the business part of the marriage. His duty it was to call upon old Sedley and his wife, and to keep the former in good humour: to draw Jos and his brother-in-law nearer together, so that Jos's position and dignity, as collector of Bogglywollah, might compensate for his father's loss of station, and tend to reconcile

old Osborne to the alliance: and finally, to communicate it to the latter in such a way as should least irritate the old gentleman.

Now, before he faced the head of the Osborne house with the news which it was his duty to tell, Dobbin bethought him that it would be politic to make friends of the rest of the family, and, if possible, have the ladies on his side. They can't be angry in their hearts, thought he. No woman ever was really angry at a romantic marriage. A little crying out, and they must come round to their brother; when the three of us will lay siege to old Mr. Osborne. So this Machiavellian captain of infantry cast about him for some happy means or stratagem by which he could gently and gradually bring the Miss Osbornes to a knowledge of their brother's secret.

By a little inquiry regarding his mother's engagements, he was pretty soon able to find out by whom of her ladyship's friends parties were given at that season; where he would be likely to meet Osborne's sisters; and, though he had that abhorrence of routs and evening parties, which many sensible men, alas, entertain, he soon found one where the Miss Osbornes were to be present. Making his appearance at the ball, where he danced a couple of sets with both of them, and was prodigiously polite, he actually had the courage to ask Miss Osborne for a few minutes' conversation at an early hour the next day, when he had, he said, to communicate to her news of the very greatest interest.

What was it that made her start back, and gaze upon him for a moment, and then on the ground at her feet, and make as if she would faint on his arm, had he not by opportunely treading on her toes, brought the young lady back to self-control? Why was she so violently agitated at Dobbin's request? This can never be known. But when he came the next day, Maria was not in the drawing-room with her sister, and Miss Wirt went off for the purpose of fetching the latter, and the Captain and Miss Osborne were left together. They were both so silent that the tick-tock of the Sacrifice of Iphigenia clock on the mantel-piece became quite rudely audible.

"What a nice party it was last night," Miss Osborne at length began, encouragingly; "and—and how you're improved in your dancing, Captain Dobbin. Surely somebody has taught you," she added, with amiable archness.

"You should see me dance a reel with Mrs. Major O'Dowd of ours; and a jig—did you ever see a jig? But I think anybody could dance with *you*, Miss Osborne, who dance so well."

"Is the Major's lady young and beautiful? Captain," the fair questioner continued. "Ah, what a terrible thing it must be to be a soldier's wife! I wonder they have any spirits to dance, and in these dreadful times of war too! O Captain Dobbin, I tremble sometimes when I think of our dearest George, and the dangers of the poor soldier. Are there many married officers of the —th, Captain Dobbin?"

"Upon my word, she's playing her hand rather too openly," Miss Wirt thought; but this observation is merely parenthetic, and was not heard through the crevice of the door at which the governess uttered it.

"One of our young men is just married," Dobbin said, now coming to

the point. "It was a very old attachment, and the young couple are as poor as church mice."

"O, how delightful! O, how romantic!" Miss Osborne cried, as the Captain said "old attachment" and "poor." Her sympathy encouraged him.

"The finest young fellow in the regiment," he continued. "Not a braver or handsomer officer in the army; and such a charming wife! How you would like her; how you *will* like her when you know her, Miss Osborne." The young lady thought the actual moment had arrived, and that Dobbin's nervousness which now came on and was visible in many twitchings of his face, in his manner of beating the ground with his great feet, in the rapid buttoning and unbuttoning of his frock-coat, &c.—Miss Osborne, I say, thought that when he had given himself a little air, he would unbosom himself entirely, and prepared eagerly to listen. And the clock, in the altar on which Iphigenia was situated, beginning, after a preparatory convulsion, to toll twelve, the mere tolling seemed as if it would last until one—so prolonged was the knell to the anxious spinster.

"But it 's not about marriage that I came to speak—that is that marriage—that is—no, I mean—my dear Miss Osborne, it 's about our dear friend George," Dobbin said.

"About George?" she said in a tone so discomfited that Maria and Miss Wirt laughed at the other side of the door, and even that abandoned wretch of a Dobbin felt inclined to smile himself; for he was not altogether unconscious of the state of affairs; George having often bantered him gracefully and said "Hang it, Will, why don't you take old Polly? She 'll have you if you ask her. I 'll bet you five to two she will."

"Yes, about George, then," he continued. "There has been a difference between him and Mr. Osborne. And I regard him so much—for you know we have been like brothers—that I hope and pray the quarrel may be settled. We must go abroad, Miss Osborne. We may be ordered off at a day's warning. Who knows what may happen in the campaign? Don't be agitated, dear Miss Osborne; and those two at least should part friends."

"There has been no quarrel, Captain Dobbin, except a little usua scene with papa," the lady said. "We are expecting George back daily. What papa wanted was only for his good. He has but to come back, and I 'm sure all will be well; and dear Rhoda, who went away from here in sad sad anger, I know will forgive him. Woman forgives but too readily, Captain."

"Such an angel as *you* I am sure would," Mr. Dobbin said, with atrocious astuteness. "And no man can pardon himself for giving a woman pain. What would you feel, if a man were faithless to you?"

"I should perish—I should throw myself out of window—I should take poison—I should pine and die. I know I should," Miss cried, who had nevertheless gone through one or two affairs of the heart without any idea of suicide.

"And there are others," Dobbin continued, "as true and as kind-hearted as yourself. I 'm not speaking about the West India heiress, Miss Osborne, but about a poor girl whom George once loved, and who

was bred from her childhood to think of nobody but him. I 've seen her in her poverty uncomplaining, broken-hearted, without a fault. It is of Miss Sedley I speak. Dear Miss Osborne, can your generous heart quarrel with your brother for being faithful to her? Could his own conscience ever forgive him if he deserted her? Be her friend—she always loved you—and—and I am come here charged by George to tell you that he holds his engagement to her as the most sacred duty he has; and to entreat *you*, at least, to be on his side."

When any strong emotion took possession of Mr. Dobbin, and after the first word or two of hesitation, he could speak with perfect fluency, and it was evident that his eloquence on this occasion made some impression upon the lady whom he addressed.

"Well," said she, "this is—most surprising—most painful—most extraordinary—what will Papa say?—that George should fling away such a superb establishment as was offered to him,—but at any rate he has found a very brave champion in you, Captain Dobbin. It is of no use, however," she continued, after a pause, "I feel for poor Miss Sedley, most certainly—most sincerely you know. We never thought the match a good one, though we were always very kind to her here—very. But Papa will never consent, I am sure. And a well brought up young woman you know,—with a well regulated mind must—George must give her up, dear Captain Dobbin, indeed he must."

"Ought a man to give up the woman he loved, just when misfortune befel her?" Dobbin said, holding out his hand. "Dear Miss Osborne! is this the counsel I hear from *you?* My dear young lady! you must befriend her. He can't give her up. He must not give her up. Would a man, think you, give *you* up if you were poor?"

This adroit question touched the heart of Miss Jane Osborne not a little. "I don't know whether we poor girls ought to believe what you men say, Captain," she said. "There is that in woman's tenderness which induces her to believe too easily. I 'm afraid you are cruel cruel deceivers,"—and Dobbin certainly thought he felt a pressure of the hand which Miss Osborne had extended to him.

He dropped it in some alarm. "Deceivers!" said he. "No, dear Miss Osborne, all men are not; your brother is not; George has loved Amelia Sedley ever since they were children; no wealth would make him marry any but her. Ought he to forsake her? Would you counsel him to do so?"

What could Miss Jane say to such a question, and with her own peculiar views? She could not answer it, so she parried it by saying, "Well, if you are not a deceiver, at least you are *very* romantic;" and Captain William let this observation pass without challenge.

At length when, by the help of farther polite speeches, he deemed that Miss Osborne was sufficiently prepared to receive the whole news, he poured it into her ear. "George could not give up Amelia—George was married to her"—and then he related the circumstances of the marriage as we know them already, how the poor girl would have died had not her lover kept his faith: how Old Sedley had refused all consent to the match, and a licence had been got: and Jos Sedley had come from Cheltenham

to give away the bride: how they had gone to Brighton in Jos's chariot-and-four to pass the honey-moon: and how George counted on his dear kind sisters to befriend him with their father, as women—so true and tender as they were—assuredly would do. And so, asking permission (readily granted) to see her again, and rightly conjecturing that the news he had brought would be told in the next five minutes to the other ladies, Captain Dobbin made his bow and took his leave.

He was scarcely out of the house, when Miss Maria and Miss Wirt rushed in to Miss Osborne, and the whole wonderful secret was imparted to them by that lady. To do them justice, neither of the sisters were very much displeased. There is something about a runaway match with which few ladies can be seriously angry, and Amelia rather rose in their estimation, from the spirit which she had displayed in consenting to the union. As they debated the story, and prattled about it, and wondered what Papa would do and say, came a loud knock, as of an avenging thunder-clap, at the door, which made these conspirators start. It must be Papa, they thought. But it was not he. It was only Mr. Frederick Bullock, who had come from the city according to appointment, to conduct the ladies to a flower-show.

This gentleman, as may be imagined, was not kept long in ignorance of the secret. But his face, when he heard it, showed an amazement which was very different to that look of sentimental wonder which the countenances of the sisters wore. Mr. Bullock was a man of the world, and a junior partner of a wealthy firm. He knew what money was, and the value of it: and a delightful throb of expectation lighted up his little eyes, and caused him to smile on his Maria, as he thought that by this piece of folly of Mr. George's she might be worth thirty thousand pounds more than he had ever hoped to get with her.

"Gad! Jane," said he, surveying even the elder sister with some interest, "Eels will be sorry he cried off. You may be a fifty thousand pounder yet."

The sisters had never thought of the money question up to that moment, but Fred Bullock bantered them with graceful gaiety about it during their forenoon's excursion; and they had risen not a little in their own esteem by the time when, the morning amusement over, they drove back to dinner. And do not let my respected reader exclaim against this selfishness as unnatural. It was but this present morning, as he rode on the omnibus from Richmond; while it changed horses, this present chronicler, being on the roof, marked three little children playing in a puddle below, very dirty and friendly and happy. To these three presently came another little one. "*Polly,*" says she, "*your sister's got a penny.*" At which the children got up from the puddle instantly, and ran off to pay their court to Peggy. And as the omnibus drove off I saw Peggy with the infantine procession at her tail, marching with great dignity towards the stall of a neighbouring lollipop-woman.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN WHICH MR. OSBORNE TAKES DOWN THE FAMILY BIBLE.

O having prepared the sisters, Dobbin hastened away to the City to perform the rest and more difficult part of the task which he had undertaken. The idea of facing old Osborne rendered him not a little nervous, and more than once he thought of leaving the young ladies to communicate the secret, which, as he was aware, they could not long retain. But he had promised to report to George upon the manner in which the elder Osborne bore the intelligence; so going into the City to the paternal counting-house in Thames Street, he despatched thence a note to Mr. Osborne begging for a half-hour's conversation relative to the affairs of his son George. Dobbin's messenger returned from Mr. Osborne's house of business, with the compliments of the latter, who would be very happy to see the Captain immediately, and away accordingly Dobbin went to confront him.

The Captain, with a half-guilty secret to confess, and with the prospect of a painful and stormy interview before him, entered Mr. Osborne's offices with a most dismal countenance and abashed gait, and, passing through the outer room where Mr. Chopper presided, was greeted by that functionary from his desk with a waggish air which farther discomfited him. Mr. Chopper winked and nodded and pointed his pen towards his patron's door, and said, "You 'll find the governor all right," with the most provoking good humour.

Osborne rose too, and shook him heartily by the hand, and said, "How do, my dear boy?" with a cordiality that made poor George's ambassador feel doubly guilty. His hand lay as if dead in the old gentleman's grasp. He felt that he, Dobbin, was more or less the cause of all that had happened. It was he had brought back George to Amelia; it was he had applauded, encouraged, transacted almost the marriage which he was come to reveal to George's father: and the latter was receiving him with smiles of welcome; patting him on the shoulder, and calling him "Dobbin, my dear boy." The envoy had indeed good reason to hang his head.

Osborne fully believed that Dobbin had come to announce his son's surrender. Mr. Chopper and his principal were talking over the matter between George and his father, at the very moment when Dobbin's

messenger arrived. Both agreed that George was sending in his submission. Both had been expecting it for some days—and "Lord! Chopper, what a marriage we'll have," Mr. Osborne said to his clerk, snapping his big fingers, and jingling all the guineas and shillings in his great pockets as he eyed his subordinate with a look of triumph.

With similar operations conducted in both pockets, and a knowing jolly air, Osborne from his chair regarded Dobbin seated blank and silent opposite to him. "What a bumpkin he is for a Captain in the army," old Osborne thought. "I wonder George hasn't taught him better manners."

At last Dobbin summoned courage to begin. "Sir," said he, "I've brought you some very grave news. I have been at the Horse Guards this morning, and there's no doubt that our regiment will be ordered abroad, and on its way to Belgium before the week is over. And you know, Sir, that we sha'nt be home again before a tussle which may be fatal to many of us."

Osborne looked grave. "My s——, the regiment will do its duty, Sir, I daresay," he said.

"The French are very strong, Sir," Dobbin went on. "The Russians and Austrians will be a long time before they can bring their troops down. We shall have the first of the fight, Sir; and depend on it Boney will take care that it shall be a hard one."

"What are you driving at, Dobbin," his interlocutor said, uneasy and with a scowl. "I suppose no Briton's afraid of any d—— Frenchman, hay?"

"I only mean, that before we go, and considering the great and certain risk that hangs over every one of us—if there are any differences between you and George—it would be as well, Sir, that—that you should shake hands: wouldn't it? Should anything happen to him, I think you would never forgive yourself if you hadn't parted in charity."

As he said this, poor William Dobbin blushed crimson, and felt and owned that he himself was a traitor. But for him, perhaps, this severance need never have taken place. Why had not George's marriage been delayed? What call was there to press it on so eagerly? He felt that George would have parted from Amelia at any rate without a mortal pang. Amelia, too, *might* have recovered the shock of losing him. It was his counsel had brought about this marriage, and all that was to ensue from it. And why was it? Because he loved her so much that he could not bear to see her unhappy: or because his own sufferings of suspense were so unendurable that he was glad to crush them at once—as we hasten a funeral after a death, or, when a separation from those we love is imminent, cannot rest until the parting be over.

"You are a good fellow, William," said Mr. Osborne in a softened voice; "and me and George shouldn't part in anger, that is true. Look here. I've done for him as much as any father ever did. He's had three times as much money from me, as I warrant your father ever gave you. But I don't brag about that. How I've toiled for him, and worked and employed my talents and energy, *I* won't say. Ask Chopper. Ask himself. Ask the City of London. Well, I propose to him such a marriage as any nobleman in the land might be proud of—the only thing in life I ever asked him—

and he refuses me. Am *I* wrong? Is the quarrel of *my* making? What do I seek but his good, for which I've been toiling like a convict ever since he was born? Nobody can say there 's anything selfish in *me*. Let him come back. I say, here 's my hand. I say, forget and forgive. As for marrying now, it 's out of the question. Let him and Miss S. make it up, and make out the marriage afterwards, when he comes back a Colonel; for he shall be a Colonel, by G—— he shall, if money can do it. I'm glad you've brought him round. I know it 's you Dobbin. You 've took him out of many a scrape before. Let him come. *I* shan't be hard. Come along, and dine in Russell Square to-day: both of you. The old shop, the old hour. You 'll find a neck of venison, and no questions asked."

This praise and confidence smote Dobbin's heart very keenly. Every moment the colloquy continued in this tone, he felt more and more guilty. "Sir," said he, "I fear you deceive yourself. I am sure you do. George is much too high-minded a man ever to marry for money. A threat on your part that you would disinherit him in case of disobedience would only be followed by resistance on his."

"Why, hang it, man, you don't call offering him eight or ten thousand a year, threatening him?" Mr. Osborne said, with still provoking good humour. "'Gad, if Miss S. will have me, I 'm her man. *I* aint particular about a shade or so of tawny." And the old gentleman gave his knowing grin, and coarse laugh.

"You forget, Sir, previous engagements into which Captain Osborne had entered," the ambassador said, gravely.

"What engagements? What the devil do you mean? You don't mean," Mr. Osborne continued, gathering wrath and astonishment as the thought now first came upon him—you don't mean that he 's such a d—— fool as to be still hankering after that swindling old bankrupt's daughter? You 've not come here for to make me suppose that he wants to marry *her?* Marry *her*, that *is* a good one. My son and heir marry a beggar's girl out of a gutter. D—— him, if he does, let him buy a broom and sweep a crossing. She was always dangling and ogling after him, I recollect now; and I've no doubt she was put on by her old sharper of a father."

"Mr. Sedley was your very good friend, Sir," Dobbin interposed, almost pleased at finding himself growing angry. "Time was you called him better names than rogue and swindler. The match was of your making. George had not right to play fast and loose————."

"Fast and loose!" howled out old Osborne. "Fast and loose! Why, hang me, those are the very words my gentleman used himself when he gave himself airs, last Thursday was a fortnight, and talked about the British army to his father who made him. What, it 's you who have been a setting of him up—is it? and my service to you, *Captain*. It 's you who want to introduce beggars into my family. Thank you for nothing, Captain. Marry *her* indeed—he, he! why should he? I warrant you she'd go to him fast enough without."

"Sir," said Dobbin, starting up in undisguised anger; "no man shall abuse that lady in my hearing, and you least of all."

"O, you 're a going to call me out, are you? Stop, let me ring the

bell for pistols for two. Mr. George sent you here to insult his father, did he?" Osborne said, pulling at the bell-cord.

"Mr. Osborne," said Dobbin, with a faltering voice, "it's you who are insulting the best creature in the world. You had best spare her, Sir, for she's your son's wife."

And with this, feeling that he could say no more, Dobbin went away, Osborne sinking back in his chair, and looking wildly after him. A clerk came in, obedient to the bell; and the Captain was scarcely out of the court where Mr. Osborne's offices were, when Mr. Chopper the chief clerk came rushing hatless after him.

"For God's sake, what is it?" Mr. Chopper said, catching the Captain by the skirt. "The governor's in a fit. What has Mr. George been doing?"

"He married Miss Sedley five days ago," Dobbin replied. "I was his groomsman, Mr. Chopper, and you must stand his friend."

The old clerk shook his head. "If that's your news, Captain, it's bad. The governor will never forgive him."

Dobbin begged Chopper to report progress to him at the hotel where he was stopping, and walked off moodily westwards, greatly perturbed as to the past and the future.

When the Russell Square family came to dinner that evening, they found the father of the house seated in his usual place, but with that air of gloom on his face, which, whenever it appeared there, kept the whole circle silent. The ladies and Mr. Bullock who dined with them, felt that the news had been communicated to Mr. Osborne. His dark looks affected Mr. Bullock so far as to render him still and quiet: but he was unusually bland and attentive to Miss Maria, by whom he sat, and to her sister presiding at the head of the table.

Miss Wirt, by consequence, was alone on her side of the board, a gap being left between her and Miss Jane Osborne. Now this was George's place when he dined at home; and his cover, as we said, was laid for him in expectation of that truant's return. Nothing occurred during dinner-time except smiling Mr. Frederic's flagging confidential whispers, and the clinking of plate and china, to interrupt the silence of the repast. The servants went about stealthily doing their duty. Mutes at funerals could not look more glum than the domestics of Mr. Osborne. The neck of venison of which he had invited Dobbin to partake, was carved by him in perfect silence; but his own share went away almost untasted, though he drank much, and the butler assiduously filled his glass.

At last, just at the end of the dinner, his eyes, which had been staring at everybody in turn, fixed themselves for a while upon the plate laid for George. He pointed to it presently with his left hand. His daughters looked at him and did not comprehend, or choose to comprehend, the signal; nor did the servants at first understand it.

"Take that plate away," at last he said, getting up with an oath—and with this pushing his chair back, he walked into his own room.

Behind Mr. Osborne's dining-room was the usual apartment which went in his house by the name of the study; and was sacred to the master of the house. Hither Mr. Osborne would retire of a Sunday forenoon when

not minded to go to church; and here pass the morning in his crimson leather chair, reading the paper. A couple of glazed book-cases were here, containing standard works in stout gilt bindings. The "Annual Register," the "Gentleman's Magazine," "Blair's Sermons," and "Hume and Smollet." From year's end to year's end he never took one of these volumes from the shelf; but there was no member of the family that would dare for his life to touch one of the books, except upon those rare Sunday evenings when there was no dinner party, and when the great scarlet Bible and Prayer-book were taken out from the corner where they stood beside his copy of the Peerage, and the servants being rung up to the dining parlour, Osborne read the evening service to his family in a loud grating pompous voice. No member of the household, child or domestic, ever entered that room without a certain terror. Here he checked the housekeeper's accounts, and overhauled the butler's cellar-book. Hence he could command, across the clean gravel court-yard, the back entrance of the stables with which one of his bells communicated, and into this yard the coachman issued from his premises as into a dock, and Osborne swore at him from the study window. Four times a year Miss Wirt entered this apartment to get her salary; and his daughters to receive their quarterly allowance. George as a boy had been horsewhipped in this room many times; his mother sitting sick on the stair listening to the cuts of the whip. The boy was scarcely ever known to cry under the punishment; the poor woman used to fondle and kiss him secretly, and give him money to soothe him when he came out.

There was a picture of the family over the mantel-piece, removed thither from the front room after Mrs. Osborne's death—George was on a poney, the elder sister holding him up a bunch of flowers; the younger led by her mother's hand; all with red cheeks and large red mouths, simpering on each other in the approved family-portrait manner. The mother lay under ground now, long since forgotten—the sisters and brother had a hundred different interests of their own, and, familiar still, were utterly estranged from each other. Some few score of years afterwards, when all the parties represented are grown old, what bitter satire there is in those flaunting childish family-portraits, with their farce of sentiment and smiling lies, and innocence so self-conscious and self-satisfied. Osborne's own stately portrait, with that of his great silver inkstand and arm-chair, had taken the place of honour in the dining-room, vacated by the family-piece.

To this study old Osborne retired then, greatly to the relief of the small party whom he left. When the servants had withdrawn, they began to talk for a while volubly but very low; then they went up stairs quietly, Mr. Bullock accompanying them stealthily on his creaking shoes. He had no heart to sit alone drinking wine, and so close to the terrible old gentleman in the study hard at hand.

An hour at least after dark, the butler, not having received any summons, ventured to tap at his door and take him in wax candles and tea. The master of the house sate in his chair, pretending to read the paper, and when the servant, placing the lights and refreshment on the table by him, retired, Mr. Osborne got up and locked the door after him. This time there was no mistaking the matter; all the household knew that some

great catastrophe was going to happen which was likely direly to affect Master George.

In the large shining mahogany escrutoire Mr. Osborne had a drawer especially devoted to his son's affairs and papers. Here he kept all the documents relating to him ever since he had been a boy: here were his prize copy-books and drawing-books, all bearing George's hand, and that of the master: here were his first letters in large round hand sending his love to papa and mama, and conveying his petitions for a cake. His dear godpapa Sedley was more than once mentioned in them. Curses quivered on old Osborne's livid lips, and horrid hatred and disappointment writhed in his heart, as looking through some of these papers he came on that name. They were all marked and docketed, and tied with red tape. It was—"From Georgy, requesting 5*s*., April 23, 18—; answered, April 25,"—or "Georgy about a poney, October 13,"—and so forth. In another packet were "Dr. S.'s accounts"—"G.'s tailor's bills and outfit, drafts on me by G. Osborne, jun." &c.,—his letters from the West Indies—his agent's letters, and the newspapers containing his commission: here was a whip he had when a boy, and in a paper a locket containing his hair, which his mother used to wear.

Turning one over after another, and musing over these memorials, the unhappy man passed many hours. His dearest vanities, ambitions, hopes, had all been here. What pride he had in his boy! He was the handsomest child ever seen. Everybody said he was like a nobleman's son. A royal princess had remarked him, and kissed him, and asked his name in Kew Gardens. What city-man could show such another? Could a prince have been better cared for? Anything that money could buy had been his son's. He used to go down on speech-days with four horses and new liveries, and scatter new shillings among the boys at the school where George was: when he went with George to the depôt of his regiment, before the boy embarked for Canada, he gave the officers such a dinner as the Duke of York might have sat down to. Had he ever refused a bill when George drew one? There they were—paid without a word. Many a general in the army couldn't ride the horses he had! He had the child before his eyes, on a hundred different days when he remembered George—after dinner, when he used to come in as bold as a lord and drink off his glass by his father's side, at the head of the table—on the poney at Brighton, when he cleared the hedge and kept up with the huntsman—on the day when he was presented to the Prince Regent at the levee, when all Saint James's couldn't produce a finer young fellow. And this, this was the end of all!—to marry a bankrupt and fly in the face of duty and fortune! What humiliation and fury: what pangs of sickening rage, balked ambition and love; what wounds of outraged vanity, tenderness even, had this old worldling now to suffer under!

Having examined these papers, and pondered over this one and the other, in that bitterest of all helpless woe, with which miserable men think of happy past times—George's father took the whole of the documents out of the drawer in which he had kept them so long, and locked them into a writing-box, which he tied and sealed with his seal. Then he opened the book-case, and took down the great red Bible we have spoken of—a

pompous book, seldom looked at, and shining all over with gold. There was a frontispiece to the volume, representing Abraham sacrificing Isaac. Here, according to custom, Osborne had recorded on the fly-leaf, and in his large clerk-like hand, the dates of his marriage and his wife's death, and the births and Christian names of his children. Jane came first, then George Sedley Osborne, then Maria Frances, and the days of the christening of each. Taking a pen, he carefully obliterated George's names from the page; and when the leaf was quite dry, restored the volume to the place from which he had moved it. Then he took a document out of another drawer, where his own private papers were kept; and having read it, crumpled it up and lighted it at one of the candles, and saw it burn entirely away in the grate. It was his will; which being burned, he sate down and wrote off a letter, and rang for his servant, whom he charged to deliver it in the morning. It was morning already: as he went up to bed, the whole house was alight with the sunshine: and the birds were singing among the fresh green leaves in Russell Square.

Anxious to keep all Mr. Osborne's family and dependants in good humour, and to make as many friends as possible for George in his hour of adversity, William Dobbin, who knew the effect which good dinners and good wines have upon the soul of man, wrote off immediately on his return to his inn, the most hospitable of invitations to Thomas Chopper, Esquire, begging that gentleman to dine with him at the Slaughter's next day. The note reached Mr. Chopper before he left the City, and the instant reply was, that "Mr. Chopper presents his respectful compliments, and will have the honour and pleasure of waiting on Captain D." The invitation and the rough draft of the answer were shown to Mrs. Chopper and her daughters on his return to Somers' Town that evening, and they talked about military gents and West End men with great exultation as the family sate and partook of tea. When the girls had gone to rest, Mr. and Mrs. C. discoursed upon the strange events which were occurring in the governor's family. Never had the clerk seen his principal so moved. When he went in to Mr. Osborne, after Captain Dobbin's departure, Mr. Chopper found his chief black in the face, and all but in a fit: some dreadful quarrel, he was certain, had occurred between Mr. O. and the young Captain. Chopper had been instructed to make out an account of all sums paid to Captain Osborne within the last three years. "And a precious lot of money he has had too," the chief clerk said, and respected his old and young master the more, for the liberal way in which the guineas had been flung about. The dispute was something about Miss Sedley. Mrs. Chopper vowed and declared, she pitied that poor young lady to lose such a handsome young fellow as the Capting. As the daughter of an unlucky speculator, who had paid a very shabby dividend, Mr. Chopper had no great regard for Miss Sedley. He respected the house of Osborne before all others in the city of London: and his hope and wish was, that Captain George should marry a nobleman's daughter. The clerk slept a great deal sounder than his principal that night; and, cuddling his children after breakfast, of which he partook with a very hearty appetite (though his modest cup of life was only sweetened with brown sugar), he set off in

his best Sunday suit and frilled shirt for business, promising his admiring wife not to punish Captain D.'s port too severely that evening.

Mr. Osborne's countenance, when he arrived in the City at his usual time, struck those dependants who were accustomed, for good reasons, to watch its expression, as peculiarly ghastly and worn. At twelve o'clock Mr. Higgs (of the firm of Higgs & Blatherwick, solicitors, Bedford Row,) called by appointment, and was ushered into the governor's private room, and closeted there for more than an hour. At about one Mr. Chopper received a note brought by Captain Dobbin's man, and containing an inclosure for Mr. Osborne, which the clerk went in and delivered. A short time afterwards Mr. Chopper and Mr. Birch, the next clerk, were summoned, and requested to witness a paper. "I've been making a new will," Mr. Osborne said, to which these gentlemen appended their names accordingly. No conversation passed. Mr. Higgs looked exceedingly grave as he came into the outer rooms, and very hard in Mr. Chopper's face; but there were not any explanations. It was remarked that Mr. Osborne was particularly quiet and gentle all day, to the surprise of those who had augured ill from his darkling demeanour. He called no man names that day, and was not heard to swear once. He left business early; and before going away, summoned his chief clerk once more, and having given him general instructions, asked him, after some seeming hesitation and reluctance to speak, if he knew whether Captain Dobbin was in town?

Chopper said he believed he was. Indeed both of them knew the fact perfectly.

Osborne took a letter directed to that officer, and, giving it to the clerk, requested the latter to deliver it into Dobbin's own hands immediately.

"And now Chopper," says he, taking his hat, and with a strange look, "my mind will be easy." Exactly as the clock struck two, (there was no doubt an appointment between the pair,) Mr. Frederick Bullock called, and he and Mr. Osborne walked away together.

The Colonel of the —th regiment, in which Messieurs Dobbin and Osborne had companies, was an old general who had made his first campaign under Wolf at Quebec, and was long since quite too old and feeble for command; but he took some interest in the regiment of which he was the nominal head, and made certain of his young officers welcome at his table, a kind of hospitality which I believe is not altogether common amongst his brethren of the present day. Captain Dobbin was an especial favourite of this old General. Dobbin was versed in the literature of his profession, and could talk about the great Frederic and the Empress Queen and their wars almost as well as the General himself, who was indifferent to the triumphs of the present day, and whose heart was with the tacticians of fifty years back. This officer sent a summons to Dobbin to come and breakfast with him, on the morning when Mr. Osborne altered his will and Mr. Chopper put on his best shirt frill, and then informed his young favourite, a couple of days in advance, of that which they were all expecting—a marching order to go to Belgium. The order for the regiment to hold itself in readiness would leave the Horse Guards in a day or two; and as transports were in plenty, they would get their route before the week was over. Recruits had come in during the stay of the regiment at Chatham; and the old General hoped that the regiment which had helped to beat Montcalm in Canada, and to rout Mr. Washington on Long Island, would prove itself worthy of its historical reputation on the oft-trodden battle-grounds of the Low Countries. "And so my good friend, if you have any *affaire là*," said the old General, taking a pinch of snuff with his trembling white old hand, and then pointing to the spot of his *robe de chambre* under which his heart was still feebly beating, "if you have any Phillis to console, or to bid farewell to papa and mama, or any will to make, I recommend you to set about your business without delay." With which the General gave his young friend a finger to shake, and a good-natured nod of his powdered and pig-tailed head; and the door being closed upon Dobbin, sate down to pen a *poulet* (he was exceedingly vain of his French) to Mademoiselle Amenaide of His Majesty's Theatre.

This news made Dobbin grave, and he thought of our friends at Brighton, and then he was ashamed of himself that Amelia was always the first thing in his thoughts, (always before anybody—before father and mother, sisters and duty—always at waking and sleeping indeed, and all day long); and returning to his hotel, he sent off a brief note to Mr. Osborne acquainting him with the information which he had received, and which might tend farther, he hoped, to bring about a reconciliation with George.

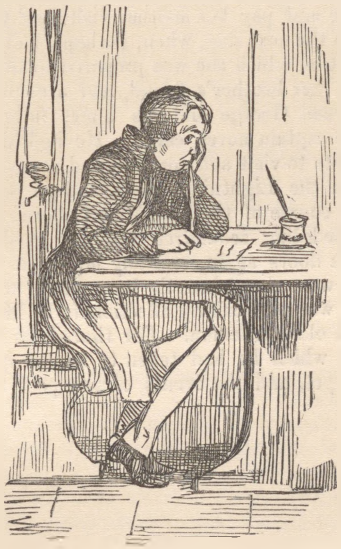
This note, dispatched by the same messenger who had carried the invitation to Chopper on the previous day, alarmed the worthy clerk not a little. It was inclosed to him, and as he opened the letter he trembled lest the dinner should be put off on which he was calculating. His mind

was inexpressibly relieved when he found that the envelope was only a reminder for himself. ("I shall expect you at half-past five," Captain Dobbin wrote). He was very much interested about his employer's family; but, *que voulez vous?* a grand dinner was of more concern to him than the affairs of any other mortal.

Dobbin was quite justified in repeating the General's information to any officers of the regiment whom he should see in the course of his peregrinations; accordingly he imparted it to Ensign Stubble, whom he met at the agent's, and who, such was his military ardour, went off instantly to purchase a new sword at the accoutrement-maker's. Here this young fellow, who though only seventeen years of age, and about sixty-five inches high, with a constitution naturally rickety and much impaired by premature brandy and water, had an undoubted courage and a lion's heart, poised, tried, bent, and balanced a weapon such as he thought would do execution amongst Frenchmen. Shouting "Ha, ha," and stamping his little feet with tremendous energy, he delivered the point twice or thrice at Captain Dobbin, who parried the thrust laughingly with his bamboo walking-stick.

Mr. Stubble, as may be supposed from his size and slenderness, was of the Light Bobs. Ensign Spooney, on the contrary, was a tall youth, and belonged to (Captain Dobbin's) the Grenadier Company, and he tried on a new bear-skin cap, under which he looked savage beyond his years. Then these two lads went off to the Slaughter's, and having ordered a famous dinner, sate down and wrote off letters to the kind anxious parents at home—letters full of love and heartiness, and pluck and bad spelling. Ah! there were many anxious hearts beating through England at that time; and mothers' prayers and tears flowing in many homesteads.

Seeing young Stubble engaged in composition at one of the coffee-room



tables at the Slaughter's, and the tears trickling down his nose on to the paper, (for the youngster was thinking of his mama, and that he might never see her again,) Dobbin, who was going to write off a letter to George Osborne, relented, and locked up his desk. "Why should I?" said he. "Let her have this night happy. I'll go and see my parents early in the morning, and go down to Brighton myself to-morrow."

So he went up and laid his big hand on young Stubble's shoulder, and backed up that young champion, and told him if he would leave off brandy and water he would be a good soldier, as he always was a gentlemanly good-hearted fellow. Young Stubble's eyes brightened up at this, for Dobbin was greatly respected in the regiment, as the best officer and the cleverest man in it.

"Thank you, Dobbin," he said, rubbing his eyes with his knuckles, "I was just—just telling her I would. And, O Sir, she 's so *dam* kind to me." The water pumps were at work again, and I am not sure that the soft-hearted Captain's eyes did not also twinkle.

The two ensigns, the captain and Mr. Chopper, dined together in the same box. Chopper brought the letter from Mr. Osborne in which the latter briefly presented his compliments to Captain Dobbin, and requested him to forward the inclosed to Captain George Osborne. Chopper knew nothing further; he described Mr. Osborne's appearance, it is true, and his interview with his lawyer, wondered how the governor had sworn at nobody, and, especially as the wine circled round, abounded in speculations and conjectures. But these grew more vague with every glass, and at length became perfectly unintelligible. At a late hour Captain Dobbin put his guest into a hackney coach, in a hiccupping state, and swearing that he would be the kick—the kick—captain's friend for ever and ever.

When Captain Dobbin took leave of Miss Osborne we have said that he asked leave to come and pay her another visit, and the spinster expected him for some hours the next day, when, perhaps, had he come, and had he asked her that question which she was prepared to answer, she would have declared herself as her brother's friend, and a reconciliation might have been effected between George and his angry father. But though she waited at home the captain never came. He had his own affairs to pursue; his own parents to visit and console; and at an early hour of the day to take his place on the Lightning coach, and go down to his friends at Brighton. In the course of the day Miss Osborne heard her father give orders that that meddling scoundrel, Captain Dobbin, should never be admitted within his doors again, and any hopes in which she may have indulged privately, were thus abruptly brought to an end. Mr. Frederic Bullock came, and was particularly affectionate to Maria, and attentive to the broken-spirited old gentleman. For though he said his mind would be easy, the means which he had taken to secure quiet did not seem to have succeeded as yet, and the events of the past two days had visibly shattered him.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN WHICH ALL THE PRINCIPAL PERSONAGES THINK FIT TO LEAVE BRIGHTON.

CONDUCTED to the ladies, at the Ship Inn, Dobbin assumed a jovial and rattling manner, which proved that this young officer was becoming a more consummate hypocrite every day of his life. He was trying to hide his own private feelings, first upon seeing Mrs. George Osborne in her new condition, and secondly to mask the apprehensions he entertained as to the effect which the dismal news brought down by him would certainly have upon her.

"It is my opinion, George," he said, "that the French Emperor will be upon us, horse and foot, before three weeks are over, and will give the Duke such a dance as shall make the Peninsula appear mere child's play. But you need not say that to Mrs. Osborne, you know. There mayn't be any fighting on our side after all, and our business in Belgium may turn out to be a mere military occupation. Many persons think so; and Brussels is full of fine people and ladies of fashion." So it was agreed to represent the duty of the British army in Belgium in this harmless light to Amelia.

This plot being arranged, the hypocritical Dobbin saluted Mrs. George Osborne quite gaily, tried to pay her one or two compliments relative to her new position as a bride (which compliments, it must be confessed, were exceedingly clumsy and hung fire wofully), and then fell to talking about Brighton, and the sea-air, and the gaieties of the place, and the beauties of the road and the merits of the "Lightning" coach and horses, —all in a manner quite incomprehensible to Amelia, and very amusing to Rebecca, who was watching the Captain, as indeed she watched every one near whom she came.

Little Amelia, it must be owned, had rather a mean opinion of her husband's friend, Captain Dobbin. He lisped—he was very plain and homely-looking: and exceedingly awkward and ungainly. She liked him for his attachment to her husband, (to be sure there was very little merit in that), and she thought George was most generous and kind in extending his friendship to his brother officer. George had mimicked Dobbin's lisp and queer manners many times to her, though to do him justice, he

always spoke most highly of his friend's good qualities. In her little day of triumph, and not knowing him intimately as yet, she made light of honest William—and he knew her opinions of him quite well, and acquiesced in them very humbly. A time came when she knew him better, and changed her notions regarding him: but that was distant as yet.

As for Rebecca, Captain Dobbin had not been two hours in the ladies' company, before she understood his secret perfectly. She did not like him, and feared him privately; nor was he very much prepossessed in her favour. He was so honest, that her arts and cajoleries did not affect him, and he shrank from her with instinctive repulsion. And, as she was by no means so far superior to her sex as to be above jealousy, she disliked him the more for his adoration of Amelia. Nevertheless, she was very respectful and cordial in her manner towards him. A friend to the Osbornes! a friend to her dearest benefactors! She vowed she should always love him sincerely: she remembered him quite well on the Vauxhall night, as she told Amelia archly, and she made a little fun of him when the two ladies went to dress for dinner. Rawdon Crawley paid scarcely any attention to Dobbin, looking upon him as a good-natured nincompoop, and under-bred city man. Jos patronised him with much dignity.

When George and Dobbin were alone in the latter's room, to which George had followed him, Dobbin took from his desk the letter which he had been charged by Mr. Osborne to deliver to his son. "It 's not in my father's hand-writing," said George, looking rather alarmed; nor was it: the letter was from Mr. Osborne's lawyer, and to the following effect:—

"Bedford Row, *May* 7, 1815.

"Sir,

"I am commissioned by Mr. Osborne to inform you, that he abides by the determination which he before expressed to you, and that in consequence of the marriage which you have been pleased to contract, he ceases to consider you henceforth as a member of his family. This determination is final and irrevocable.

"Although the monies expended upon you in your minority, and the bills which you have drawn upon him so unsparingly of late years, far exceed in amount the sum to which you are entitled in your own right, (being the third part of the fortune of your mother, the late Mrs. Osborne, and which reverted to you at her decease, and to Miss Jane Osborne and Miss Maria Frances Osborne;) yet I am instructed by Mr. Osborne to say, that he waives all claim upon your estate, and that the sum of £2000, 4 per cent. annuities, at the value of the day (being your one-third share of the sum of £6000,) shall be paid over to yourself or your agents upon your receipt for the same, by

"Your obedient Servt.,
"S. Higgs."

"P.S.—Mr. Osborne desires me to say, once for all, that he declines to receive any messages, letters, or communications from you on this or any other subject."

"A pretty way you have managed the affair," said George, looking savagely at William Dobbin. "Look there, Dobbin," and he flung over to the latter his parent's letter. "A beggar, by Jove, and all in consequence of my d—d sentimentality. Why couldn't we have waited? A ball might have done for me in the course of the war, and may still, and how will Emmy be bettered by being left a beggar's widow? It was all your doing. You were never easy until you had got me married and ruined. What the deuce am I to do with two thousand pounds? Such a sum won't last two years. I 've lost a hundred and forty to Crawley at cards and billiards since I 've been down here. A pretty manager of a man's matters *you* are, forsooth."

"There 's no denying that the position is a hard one," Dobbin replied, after reading over the letter with a blank countenance; "and, as you say, it is partly of my making. There are some men that wouldn't mind changing with you," he added, with a bitter smile. "How many Captains in the regiment have two thousand pounds to the fore, think you? You must live on your pay till your father relents, and if you die, you leave your wife a hundred a year."

"Do you suppose a man of my habits can live on his pay and a hundred a year?" George cried out in great anger. "You must be a fool to talk so, Dobbin. How the deuce am I to keep up my position in the world upon such a pitiful pittance? I can't change my habits. I *must* have my comforts. *I* wasn't brought up on porridge like MacWhirter, or on potatoes, like old O'Dowd. Do you expect my wife to take in soldiers' washing, or ride after the regiment in a baggage waggon?"

"Well, well," said Dobbin, still good-naturedly, "we 'll get her a better conveyance. But try and remember that you are only a dethroned prince now, George, my boy; and be quiet whilst the tempest lasts. It won't be for long. Let your name be mentioned in the Gazette, and I 'll engage the old father relents towards you."

"Mentioned in the Gazette!" George answered. "And in what part of it? Among the killed and wounded returns, and at the top of the list, very likely."

"Psha! It will be time enough to cry out when we are hurt," Dobbin said. "And if anything happens, you know, George, I have got a little, and I am not a marrying man, and I shall not forget my godson in my will," he added, with a smile. Whereupon the dispute ended,—as many scores of such conversations between Osborne and his friend had concluded previously—by the former declaring there was no possibility of being angry with Dobbin long, and forgiving him very generously after abusing him without cause.

"I say, Becky," cried Rawdon Crawley out of his dressing-room, to his lady, who was attiring herself for dinner in her own chamber.

"What?" said Becky's shrill voice. She was looking over her shoulder in the glass. She had put on the neatest and freshest white frock imaginable, and with bare shoulders and a little necklace, and a light blue sash, she looked the image of youthful innocence and girlish happiness.

"I say, what 'll Mrs. O. do, when O. goes out with the regiment?" Crawley said coming into the room, performing a duet on his head with

two huge hair-brushes, and looking out from under his hair with admiration on his pretty little wife.

"I suppose she 'll cry her eyes out," Becky answered. "She has been whimpering half-a-dozen of times at the very notion of it, already to me."

"*You* don't care, I suppose," Rawdon said, half angry at his wife's want of feeling.

"You wretch! don't you know that I intend to go with you," Becky replied. "Besides, you 're different. You go as General Tufto's aide-de-camp. *We* don't belong to the line," Mrs. Crawley said, throwing up her head with an air that so enchanted her husband that he stooped down and kissed it.

"Rawdon, dear—don't you think—you 'd better get that—money from Cupid, before he goes?" Becky continued, fixing on a killing bow. She called George Osborne, Cupid. She had flattered him about his good looks a score of times already. She watched over him kindly at écarté of a night when he would drop in to Rawdon's quarters for a half-hour before bed-time.

She had often called him a horrid dissipated wretch, and threatened to tell Emmy of his wicked ways and naughty extravagant habits. She brought his cigar and lighted for him; she knew the effect of that manœuvre,

having practised it in former days upon Rawdon Crawley. He thought her gay, brisk, arch, distinguée, delightful. In their little drives and dinners Becky, of course, quite outshone poor Emmy, who remained very mute and timid while Mrs. Crawley and her husband rattled away together, and Captain Crawley (and Jos after he joined the young married people) gobbled in silence.

Emmy's mind somehow misgave her about her friend. Rebecca's wit, spirits, and accomplishments troubled her with a rueful disquiet. They were only a week married, and here was George already suffering ennui and eager for others' society! She trembled for the future. How shall I be a companion for him, she thought,—so clever and so brilliant, and I such a humble foolish creature? How noble it was of him to marry me—to give up everything and stoop down to me. I ought to have refused him, only I had not the heart. I ought to have stopped at home and taken care of poor papa. And her neglect of her parents (and indeed there was some foundation for this charge which the poor child's uneasy conscience brought against her) was now remembered for the first time, and caused her to blush with humiliation. Oh! thought she, I have been very wicked and selfish—selfish in forgetting them in their sorrows—selfish in forcing George to marry me. I know I 'm not worthy of him—I know he would have been happy without me—and yet—I tried, I tried to give him up.

It is hard when, before seven days of marriage are over, such thoughts and confessions as these force themselves on a little bride's mind. But so it was, and the night before Dobbin came to join these young people—on a fine brilliant moonlight night of May—so warm and balmy that the windows were flung open to the balcony, from which George and Mrs. Crawley were gazing upon the calm ocean spread shining before them, while Rawdon and Jos were engaged at back gammon within—Amelia couched in a great chair quite neglected, and watching both these parties, felt a despair and remorse such as were bitter companions for that tender lonely soul. Scarce a week was past, and it was come to this! The future, had she regarded it, offered a dismal prospect; but Emmy was too shy, so to speak, to look to that, and embark alone on that wide sea, and unfit to navigate it without a guide and protector. I know Miss Smith has a mean opinion of her. But how many, my dear Madam, are endowed with your prodigious strength of mind?

"Gad, what a fine night, and how bright the moon is!" George said, with a puff of his cigar, which went soaring up skywards.

"How delicious they smell in the open air! I adore them. Who 'd think the moon was two hundred and thirty-six thousand eight hundred and forty-seven miles off?" she added, gazing at that orb with a smile. "Isn 't it clever of me to remember that? Pooh! we learned it all at Miss Pinkerton's! How calm the sea is, and how clear everything. I declare I can almost see the coast of France?" and her bright green eyes streamed out, and shot into the night as if they *could* see through it.

"Do you know what I intend to do one morning?" she said; "I find I can swim beautifully, and some day, when my Aunt Crawley's companion—old Briggs, you know—you remember her—that hook-nosed woman, with

the long wisps of hair—when Briggs goes out to bathe, I intend to dive under her awning, and insist on a reconciliation in the water. Isn't that a stratagem?"

George burst out laughing at the idea of this aquatic meeting. "What's the row there, you two?" Rawdon shouted out, rattling the box. Amelia was making a fool of herself in an absurd hysterical manner, and retired to her own room to whimper in private.

Our history is destined in this Chapter to go backwards and forwards in a very irresolute manner seemingly, and having conducted our story to to-morrow presently, we shall immediately again have occasion to step back to yesterday, so that the whole of the tale may get a hearing. As you behold at her Majesty's drawing-room, the ambassadors' and high dignitaries' carriages whisk off from a private door, while Captain Jones's ladies are waiting for their fly: as you see in the Secretary of the Treasury's antechamber, a half-dozen of petitioners waiting patiently for their audience, and called out one by one, when suddenly an Irish member or some eminent personage enters the apartment, and instantly walks into Mr. Under-Secretary over the heads of all the people present: so in the conduct of a tale, the romancer is obliged to exercise this most partial sort of justice. Although all the little incidents must be heard, yet they must be put off when the great events make their appearance; and surely such a circumstance as that which brought Dobbin to Brighton, viz. the ordering out of the Guards and the line to Belgium, and the mustering of the allied armies in that country under the command of his Grace the Duke of Wellington—such a dignified circumstance as that I say—was entitled to the *pas* over all minor occurrences whereof this history is composed mainly, and hence a little trifling disarrangement and disorder was excusable and becoming. We have only now advanced in time so far beyond Chapter XXII. as to have got our various characters up into their dressing-rooms before the dinner, which took place as usual on the day of Dobbin's arrival.

George was too humane or too much occupied with the tie of his neckcloth to convey at once all the news to Amelia which his comrade had brought with him from London. He came into her room, however, holding the attorney's letter in his hand, and with so solemn and important an air that his wife, always ingeniously on the watch for calamity, thought the worst was about to befal, and running up to her husband, besought her dearest George to tell her everything—he was ordered abroad; there would be a battle next week—she knew there would.

Dearest George parried the question about foreign service, and with a melancholy shake of the head said, "No, Emmy; it isn't that: it's not myself I care about: it's you. I have had bad news from my father. He refuses any communication with me; he has flung us off; and leaves us to poverty. *I* can rough it well enough; but you, my dear, how will you bear it? read here. And he handed her over the letter.

Amelia, with a look of tender alarm in her eyes, listened to her noble hero as he uttered the above generous sentiments, and sitting down on the bed, read the letter which George gave her with such a pompous martyr-like air. Her face cleared up as she read the document, however. The idea of sharing poverty and privation in company with the beloved object, is,

as we have before said, far from being disagreeable to a warm-hearted woman. The notion was actually pleasant to little Amelia. Then, as usual, she was ashamed of herself for feeling happy at such an indecorous moment, and checked her pleasure, saying demurely, "O, George, how your poor heart must bleed at the idea of being separated from your papa."

"It does," said George, with an agonised countenance.

"But he can't be angry with you long," she continued. "Nobody could, I'm sure. He must forgive you, my dearest, kindest husband. O, I shall never forgive myself if he does not."

"What vexes me, my poor Emmy, is not *my* misfortune, but yours," George said. "I don't care for a little poverty; and I think, without vanity, I've talents enough to make my own way."

"That you have," interposed his wife, who thought that war should cease, and her husband should be made a general instantly.

"Yes, I shall make my way as well as another," Osborne went on; "but you, my dear girl, how can I bear your being deprived of the comforts and station in society which my wife had a right to expect? My dearest girl in barracks; the wife of a soldier in a marching regiment; subject to all sorts of annoyance and privation! It makes me miserable."

Emmy, quite at ease, as this was her husband's only cause of disquiet, took his hand, and with a radiant face and smile began to warble that stanza from the favourite song of "Wapping Old Stairs," in which the heroine, after rebuking her Tom for inattention, promises "his trowsers to mend, and his grog too to make," if he will be constant and kind, and not forsake her. "Besides," she said, after a pause, during which she looked as pretty and happy as any young woman need, "isn't two thousand pounds an immense deal of money, George?"

George laughed at her naïveté; and finally they went down to dinner, Amelia clinging on George's arm, still warbling the tune of "Wapping Old Stairs," and more pleased and light of mind than she had been for some days past.

Thus the repast, which at length came off, instead of being dismal, was an exceedingly brisk and merry one. The excitement of the campaign counteracted in George's mind the depression occasioned by the disinheriting letter. Dobbin still kept up his character of rattle. He amused the company with accounts of the army in Belgium, where nothing but fêtes and gaiety and fashion were going on. Then, having a particular end in view, this dexterous captain proceeded to describe Mrs. Major O'Dowd, packing her own and her Major's wardrobe, and how his best epaulets had been stowed into a tea canister, whilst her own famous yellow turban, with the bird of paradise wrapped in brown paper, was locked up in the Major's tin cocked-hat case, and wondered what effect it would have at the French king's court at Ghent, or the great military balls at Brussels.

"Ghent! Brussels!" cried out Amelia with a sudden shock and start. "Is the regiment ordered away, George,—is it ordered away?" A look of terror came over the sweet smiling face, and she clung to George as by an instinct.

"Don't be afraid, dear," he said good-naturedly; "it is but a twelve hour's passage. It won't hurt you. You shall go, too, Emmy."

"*I* intend to go," said Becky, "I'm on the staff. General Tufto is a great flirt of mine. Is'nt he, Rawdon?"

Rawdon laughed out with his usual roar. William Dobbin flushed up quite red. "She can't go," he said; "think of the—of the danger," he was going to add; but had not all his conversation during dinner-time tended to prove there was none? He became very confused and silent.

"I must and will go," Amelia cried with the greatest spirit; and George, applauding her resolution, patted her under the chin, and asked all the persons present if they ever saw such a termagant of a wife, and agreed that the lady should bear him company. "We'll have Mrs. O'Dowd to chaperon you," he said. What cared she so long as her husband was near her? Thus somehow the bitterness of a parting was juggled away. Though war and danger were in store, war and danger might not befal for months to come. There was a respite at any rate, which made the timid little Amelia almost as happy as a full reprieve would have done, and which even Dobbin owned in his heart was very welcome. For, to be permitted to see her was now the greatest privilege and hope of his life, and he thought with himself secretly how he would watch and protect her. I wouldn't have let her go if I had been married to her, he thought. But George was the master, and his friend did not think fit to remonstrate.

Putting her arm round her friend's waist, Rebecca at length carried Amelia off from the dinner-table where so much business of importance had been discussed, and left the gentlemen in a highly exhilarated state, drinking and talking very gaily.

In the course of the evening Rawdon got a little family-note from his wife, which although he crumpled it up and burnt it instantly in the candle, we had the good luck to read over Rebecca's shoulder. "Great news," she wrote. "Mrs. Bute is gone. Get the money from Cupid to-night, as he'll be off to-morrow most likely. Mind this.—R." So when the little company was about adjourning to coffee in the women's apartment, Rawdon touched Osborne on the elbow, and said gracefully, "I say, Osborne, my boy, if quite convenient, I'll trouble you for that 'ere small trifle." It was not quite convenient, but nevertheless George gave him a considerable present instalment in bank notes from his pocket-book, and a bill on his agents at a week's date, for the remaining sum.

This matter arranged, George, and Jos, and Dobbin, held a council of war over their cigars, and agreed that a general move should be made for London in Jos's open carriage the next day. Jos, I think, would have preferred staying until Rawdon Crawley quitted Brighton, but Dobbin and George overruled him, and he agreed to carry the party to town, and ordered four horses, as became his dignity. With these they set off in state, after breakfast, the next day. Amelia had risen very early in the morning, and packed her little trunks with the greatest alacrity, while Osborne lay in bed deploring that she had not a maid to help her. She was only too glad, however, to perform this office for herself. A dim uneasy sentiment about Rebecca filled her mind already; and although they kissed each other most tenderly at parting, yet we know what jealousy is; and Mrs. Amelia possessed that among other virtues of her sex.

Besides these characters who are coming and going away, we must

remember that there were some other old friends of ours at Brighton; Miss Crawley, namely, and the suite in attendance upon her. Now, although Rebecca and her husband were but at a few stones' throw of the lodgings which the invalid Miss Crawley occupied, the old lady's door remained as pitilessly closed to them as it had been heretofore in London. As long as she remained by the side of her sister-in-law, Mrs. Bute Crawley took care that her beloved Matilda should not be agitated by a meeting with her nephew. When the spinster took her drive, the faithful Mrs. Bute sate beside her in the carriage. When Miss Crawley took the air in a chair, Mrs. Bute marched on one side of the vehicle, whilst honest Briggs occupied the other wing. And if they met Rawdon and his wife by chance—although the former constantly and obsequiously took off his hat, the Miss-Crawley party passed him by with such a frigid and killing indifference, that Rawdon began to despair.

"We might as well be in London as here," Captain Rawdon often said, with a downcast air.

"A comfortable inn in Brighton is better than a spunging-house in Chancery Lane," his wife answered, who was of a more cheerful temperament. "Think of those two aides-de-camp of Mr. Moses, the sheriff's-

officer, who watched our lodging for a week. Our friends here are very

stupid, but Mr. Jos and Captain Cupid are better companions than Mr. Moses's men, Rawdon, my love."

"I wonder the writs haven't followed me down here," Rawdon continued, still desponding.

"When they do, we 'll find means to give them the slip," said dauntless little Becky, and further pointed out to her husband the great comfort and advantage of meeting Jos and Osborne, whose acquaintance had brought to Rawdon Crawley a most timely little supply of ready money.

"It will hardly be enough to pay the inn bill," grumbled the Guardsman.

"Why need we pay it?" said the lady, who had an answer for everything.

Through Rawdon's valet, who still kept up a trifling acquaintance with the male inhabitants of Miss Crawley's servants' hall, and was instructed to treat the coachman to drink whenever they met, old Miss Crawley's movements were pretty well known by our young couple; and Rebecca luckily bethought herself of being unwell, and of calling in the same apothecary who was in attendance upon the spinster, so that their information was on the whole tolerably complete. Nor was Miss Briggs, although forced to adopt a hostile attitude, secretly inimical to Rawdon and his wife. She was naturally of a kindly and forgiving disposition. Now that the cause of jealousy was removed, her dislike for Rebecca disappeared also, and she remembered the latter's invariable good words and good humour. And, indeed, she and Mrs. Firkin, the lady's-maid, and the whole of Miss Crawley's household, secretly groaned under the tyranny of the triumphant Mrs. Bute.

As often will be the case, that good but imperious woman pushed her advantages too far, and her successes quite unmercifully. She had in the course of a few weeks brought the invalid to such a state of helpless docility, that the poor soul yielded herself entirely to her sister's orders, and did not even dare to complain of her slavery to Briggs or Firkin. Mrs. Bute measured out the glasses of wine which Miss Crawley was daily allowed to take with irresistible accuracy, greatly to the annoyance of Firkin and the butler, who found themselves deprived of control over even the Sherry-bottle. She apportioned the sweet-breads, jellies, chickens; their quantity and order. Night and noon and morning she brought the abominable drinks ordained by the Doctor, and made her patient swallow them with so affecting an obedience, that Firkin said my poor Missus du take her physic like a lamb. She prescribed the drive in the carriage or the ride in the chair, and, in a word, ground down the old lady in her convalescence in such a way as only belongs to your proper-managing, motherly, moral woman. If ever the patient faintly resisted, and pleaded for a little bit more dinner or a little drop less medicine, the nurse threatened her with instantaneous death, when Miss Crawley instantly gave in. "She 's no spirit left in her," Firkin remarked to Briggs; "she aint ave called me a fool these three weeks." Finally, Mrs. Bute had made up her mind to dismiss the aforesaid honest lady's-maid, Mr. Bowls the large confidential man, and Briggs herself, and to send for her daughters from the Rectory, previous to removing the dear invalid bodily to Queen's Crawley, when an odious accident happened which called her away from duties so pleasing. The Reverend Bute Crawley her husband,

riding home one night, fell with his horse and broke his collar-bone. Fever and inflammatory symptoms set in, and Mrs. Bute was forced to leave Sussex for Hampshire. As soon as ever Bute was restored she promised to return to her dearest friend, and departed, leaving the strongest injunctions with the household regarding their behaviour to their mistress; and as soon as she got into the Southampton coach, there was such a jubilee and sense of relief in all Miss Crawley's house, as the company of persons assembled there had not experienced for many a week before. That very day Miss Crawley left off her afternoon dose of medicine: that afternoon Bowls opened an independent bottle of Sherry for himself and Mrs. Firkin: that night Miss Crawley and Miss Briggs indulged in a game of picquet instead of one of Porteus's sermons. It was as in the old nursery-story, when the stick forgot to beat the dog, and the whole course of events underwent a peaceful and happy revolution.

At a very early hour in the morning, twice or thrice a week, Miss Briggs used to betake herself to a bathing-machine, and disport in the water in a flannel gown, and an oilskin cap. Rebecca, as we have seen, was aware of this circumstance, and though she did not attempt to storm Briggs as she had threatened, and actually dive into that lady's presence and surprise her under the sacredness of the awning, Mrs. Rawdon determined to attack Briggs as she came away from her bath, refreshed and invigorated by her dip, and likely to be in good humour.

So, getting up very early the next morning, Becky brought the telescope in their sitting-room, which faced the sea, to bear upon the bathing-machines on the beach; saw Briggs arrive, enter her box, and put out to sea; and was on the shore just as the nymph of whom she came in quest stepped out of the little caravan on to the shingles. It was a pretty picture: the beach; the bathing-women's faces; the long line of rocks and building were blushing and bright in the sunshine. Rebecca wore a kind, tender smile on her face, and was holding out her pretty white hand as Briggs emerged from the box. What could Briggs do but accept the salutation?

"Miss Sh—, Mrs. Crawley," she said.

Mrs. Crawley seized her hand, pressed it to her heart, and with a sudden impulse, flinging her arms round Briggs, kissed her affectionately. "Dear, dear friend!" she said, with a touch of such natural feeling, that Miss Briggs of course at once began to melt, and even the bathing-woman was mollified.

Rebecca found no difficulty in engaging Briggs in a long, intimate, and delightful conversation. Every thing that had passed since the morning of Becky's sudden departure from Miss Crawley's house in Park Lane up to the present day, and Mrs. Bute's happy retreat, was discussed and described by Briggs. All Miss Crawley's symptoms, and the particulars of her illness and medical treatment, were narrated by the confidante with that fulness and accuracy which women delight in. About their complaints and their doctors do ladies ever tire of talking to each other? Briggs did not on this occasion; nor did Rebecca weary of listening. She was thankful, truly thankful, that the dear kind Briggs, that the faithful, the invaluable Firkin, had been permitted to remain with their benefactress

through her illness. Heaven bless her! though she, Rebecca, had seemed to act undutifully towards Miss Crawley; yet was not her fault a natural and excusable one? Could she help giving her hand to the man who had won her heart? Briggs, the sentimental, could only turn up her eyes to heaven at this appeal, and heave a sympathetic sigh, and think that she, too, had given away her affections long years ago, and own that Rebecca was no very great criminal.

"Can I ever forget her who so befriended the friendless orphan? No, though she has cast me off," the latter said, "I shall never cease to love her, and I would devote my life to her service. As my own benefactress, as my beloved Rawdon's adored relative, I love and admire Miss Crawley, dear Miss Briggs, beyond any woman in the world, and next to her I love all those who are faithful to her. *I* would never have treated Miss Crawley's faithful friends as that odious designing Mrs. Bute had done. Rawdon, who was all heart," Rebecca continued, "although his outward manners might seem rough and careless, had said a hundred times, with tears in his eyes, that he blessed Heaven for sending his dearest Aunty two such admirable nurses as her attached Firkin and her admirable Miss Briggs. Should the machinations of the horrible Mrs. Bute end, as she too much feared they would, in banishing everybody that Miss Crawley loved from her side, and leaving that poor lady a victim to those harpies at the Rectory, Rebecca besought her (Miss Briggs) to remember, that her own home, humble as it was, was always open to receive Briggs. Dear friend," she exclaimed, in a transport of enthusiasm, "*some* hearts can *never* forget benefits; *all* women are not Bute Crawleys! Though why should I complain of her," Rebecca added; "though I have been her tool and the victim to her arts, do I not owe my dearest Rawdon to her?" And Rebecca unfolded to Briggs all Mrs. Bute's conduct at Queen's Crawley, which, though unintelligible to her then, was clearly enough explained by the events now,—now that the attachment had sprung up which Mrs. Bute had encouraged by a thousand artifices,—now that two innocent people had fallen into the snares which she had laid for them, and loved and married and been ruined through her schemes.

It was all very true. Briggs saw the stratagems as clearly as possible. Mrs. Bute had made the match between Rawdon and Rebecca. Yet, though the latter was a perfectly innocent victim, Miss Briggs could not disguise from her friend her fear that Miss Crawley's affections were hopelessly estranged from Rebecca, and that the old lady would never forgive her nephew for making so imprudent a marriage.

On this point Rebecca had her own opinion, and still kept up a good heart. If Miss Crawley did not forgive them at present, she might at least relent on a future day. Even now, there was only that puling, sickly Pitt Crawley between Rawdon and a baronetcy; and should anything happen to the former, all would be well. At all events, to have Mrs. Bute's designs exposed, and herself well abused, was a satisfaction, and might be advantageous to Rawdon's interest; and Rebecca, after an hour's chat with her recovered friend, left her with the most tender demonstrations of regard, and quite assured that the conversation they had had together would be reported to Miss Crawley before many hours were over.

This interview ended, it became full time for Rebecca to return to her inn, where all the party of the previous day were assembled at a farewell breakfast. Rebecca took such a tender leave of Amelia as became two women who loved each other as sisters; and having used her handkerchief plentifully, and hung on her friend's neck as if they were parting for ever, and waved the handkerchief (which was quite dry, by the way) out of window, as the carriage drove off; she came back to the breakfast-table, and ate some prawns with a good deal of appetite, considering her emotion; and while she was munching these delicacies, explained to Rawdon what had occurred in her morning walk between herself and Briggs. Her hopes were very high: she made her husband share them. She generally succeeded in making her husband share all her opinions, whether melancholy or cheerful.

"You will now, if you please, my dear, sit down at the writing-table and pen me a pretty little letter to Miss Crawley, in which you'll say that you are a good boy, and that sort of thing." So Rawdon sate down, and wrote off, "Brighton, Thursday," and "My dear Aunt," with great rapidity: but there the gallant officer's imagination failed him. He mumbled the end of his pen, and looked up in his wife's face. She could not help laughing at his rueful countenance, and, marching up and down the room with her hands behind her, the little woman began to dictate a letter, which he took down.

"Before quitting the country and commencing a campaign, which very possibly may be fatal,"

"What?" said Rawdon, rather surprised, but took the humour of the phrase, and presently wrote it down with a grin.

"Which very possibly may be fatal, I have come hither—"

"Why not say come here; Becky, come here 's grammar," the dragoon interposed.

"I have come hither," Rebecca insisted with a stamp of her foot, "to say farewell to my dearest and earliest friend. I beseech you before I go, not perhaps to return, once more to let me press the hand from which I have received nothing but kindnesses all my life."

"Kindnesses all my life," echoed Rawdon, scratching down the words, and quite amazed at his own facility of composition.

"I ask nothing from you but that we should part not in anger. I have the pride of my family on some points, though not on all. I married a painter's daughter, and am not ashamed of the union."

"No, run me through the body if I am!" Rawdon ejaculated.

"You old booby," Rebecca said, pinching his ear and looking over to see that he made no mistakes in spelling—"beseech is not spelt with an *a*, and earliest is." So he altered these words, bowing to the superior knowledge of his little Missis.

"I thought that you were aware of the progress of my attachment," Rebecca continued: "I knew that Mrs. Bute Crawley confirmed and encouraged it. But I make no reproaches. I married a poor woman, and am content to abide by what I have done. Leave your property, dear Aunt, as you will. *I* shall never complain of the way in which you dispose of it. I would have you believe that I love you for yourself, and not

for money's sake. I want to be reconciled to you ere I leave England. Let me, let me see you before I go. A few weeks or months hence it may be too late, and I cannot bear the notion of quitting the country without a kind word of farewell from you."

"She won't recognize my style in *that*," said Becky. "I made the sentences short and brisk on purpose." And this authentic missive was dispatched under cover to Miss Briggs.

Old Miss Crawley laughed when Briggs with great mystery handed her over this candid and simple statement. "We may read it now Mrs. Bute is away," she said. "Read it to me, Briggs."

When Briggs had read the epistle out, her patroness laughed more. "Don't you see, you goose," she said to Briggs, who professed to be much touched by the honest affection which pervaded the composition, "Don't you see that Rawdon never wrote a word of it. He never wrote to me without asking for money in his life, and all his letters are full of bad spelling, and dashes, and bad grammar. It is that little serpent of a governess who rules him." They are all alike, Miss Crawley thought in her heart. They all want me dead, and are hankering for my money.

"I don't mind seeing Rawdon," she added, after a pause, and in a tone of perfect indifference. "I had just as soon shake hands with him as not. Provided there is no scene, why shouldn't we meet? I don't mind. But human patience has its limits; and mind, my dear, I respectfully decline to receive Mrs. Rawdon—I can't support *that* quite"—and Miss Briggs was fain to be content with this half-message of conciliation; and thought that the best method of bringing the old lady and her nephew together, was to warn Rawdon to be in waiting on the Cliff, when Miss Crawley went out for her air in her chair.

There they met. I don't know whether Miss Crawley had any private feeling of regard, or emotion upon seeing her old favourite; but she held out a couple of fingers to him with as smiling and good-humoured an air, as if they had met only the day before. And as for Rawdon, he turned as red as scarlet, and wrung off Briggs's hand, so great was his rapture and his confusion at the meeting. Perhaps it was interest that moved him: or perhaps affection: perhaps he was touched by the change which the illness of the last weeks had wrought in his aunt.

"The old girl has always acted like a trump to me," he said to his wife, as he narrated the interview, "and I felt, you know, rather queer, and that sort of thing. I walked by the side of the what-dy'e-call-'em, you know, and to her own door, where Bowls came to help her in. And I wanted to go in very much, only—"

"*You didn't go in*, Rawdon!" screamed his wife.

"No, my dear, I'm hanged if I wasn't afraid when it came to the point."

"You fool! you ought to have gone in, and never come out again," Rebecca said.

"Don't call me names," said the big guardsman, sulkily. "Perhaps I *was* a fool, Becky, but you shouldn't say so;" and he gave his wife a look, such as his countenance could wear when angered, and such as was not pleasant to face.

"Well, dearest, to-morrow you must be on the look-out, and go and see her, mind, whether she asks you or no," Rebecca said, trying to soothe her angry yoke-mate. On which he replied, that he would do exactly as he liked, and would just thank her to keep a civil tongue in her head—and the wounded husband went away, and passed the forenoon at the billiard-room, sulky, silent, and suspicious.

But before the night was over he was compelled to give in, and own, as usual, to his wife's superior prudence and foresight, by the most melancholy confirmation of the presentiments which she had regarding the consequences of the mistake which he had made. Miss Crawley *must* have had some emotion upon seeing him and shaking hands with him after so long a rupture. She mused upon the meeting a considerable time. "Rawdon is getting very fat and old, Briggs," she said to her companion. "His nose has become red, and he is exceedingly coarse in appearance. His marriage to that woman has hopelessly vulgarised him. Mrs. Bute always said they drank together; and I have no doubt they do. Yes: he smelt of gin abominably. I remarked it. Didn't you?"

In vain Briggs interposed, that Mrs. Bute spoke ill of everybody: and, as far as a person in *her* humble position could judge, was an—

"An artful designing woman? Yes, so she is, and she does speak ill of every one,—but I am certain that woman has made Rawdon drink. All those low people do—"

"He was very much affected at seeing you, Ma'am," the companion said; "and I am sure, when you remember that he is going to the field of danger—"

"How much money has he promised you, Briggs?" the old spinster cried out, working herself into a nervous rage—"there now, of course you begin to cry. I hate scenes. Why am I always to be worried? Go and cry up in your own room, and send Firkin to me,—no, stop, sit down and blow your nose, and leave off crying, and write a letter to Captain Crawley." Poor Briggs went and placed herself obediently at the writing-book. Its leaves were blotted all over with relics of the firm, strong, rapid handwriting of the spinster's late amanuensis, Mrs. Bute Crawley.

"Begin 'My dear sir,' or 'Dear sir,' that will be better, and say you ar desired by Mrs. Crawley—no, by Miss Crawley's medical man, by Mr. Creamer, to state, that my health is such that all strong emotions would be dangerous in my present delicate condition—and that I must decline any family discussions or interviews whatever. And thank him for coming to Brighton, and so forth, and beg him not to stay any longer on my account. And, Miss Briggs, you may add that I wish him a *bon voyage*, and that if he will take the trouble to call upon my lawyer's in Grays Inn Square, he will find there a communication for him. Yes, that will do; and that will make him leave Brighton." The benevolent Briggs penned this sentence with the utmost satisfaction.

"To seize upon me the very day after Mrs. Bute was gone," the old lady prattled on; "it was too indecent. Briggs, my dear, write to Mrs. Crawley, and say *she* needn't come back. No—she needn't—and she shan't—and I won't be a slave in my own house—and I won't be starved

and choked with poison. They all want to kill me—all—all"—and with this the lonely old woman burst into a scream of hysterical tears.

The last scene of her dismal Vanity Fair comedy was fast approaching; the tawdry lamps were going out one by one; and the dark curtain was almost ready to descend.

That final paragraph, which referred Rawdon to Miss Crawley's solicitor in London, and which Briggs had written so good-naturedly, consoled the dragoon and his wife somewhat, after their first blank disappointment, on reading the spinster's refusal of a reconciliation. And it effected the purpose for which the old lady had caused it to be written, by making Rawdon very eager to get to London.

Out of Jos's losings and George Osborne's bank-notes, he paid his bill at the inn, the landlord whereof does not probably know to this day how doubtfully his account once stood. For, as a general sends his baggage to the rear before an action, Rebecca had wisely packed up all their chief valuables and sent them off under care of George's servant, who went in charge of the trunks on the coach back to London. Rawdon and his wife returned by the same conveyance next day.

"I should have liked to see the old girl before we went," Rawdon said. "She looks so cut up and altered that I 'm sure she can't last long. I wonder what sort of a cheque I shall have at Waxy's. Two hundred—it can't be less than two hundred,—hey Becky?"

In consequence of the repeated visits of the gentlemen whose portraits have been taken in a preceding page, Rawdon and his wife did not go back to their lodgings at Brompton, but put up at an inn. Early the next morning, Rebecca had an opportunity of seeing them as she skirted that suburb on her road to old Mrs. Sedley's house at Fulham, whither she went to look for her dear Amelia and her Brighton friends. They were all off to Chatham, thence to Harwich, to take shipping for Belgium with the regiment—kind old Mrs. Sedley very much depressed and tearful, solitary. Returning from this visit, Rebecca found her husband, who had been off to Gray's Inn, and learnt his fate. He came back furious.

"By Jove, Becky," says he, "she's only given me twenty pounds!"

Though it told against themselves, the joke was too good, and Becky burst out laughing at Rawdon's discomfiture.

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